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S E C R E T COLOMBO 000601

STATE FOR SCA/INS, USPACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/20/2018
TAGS: [CE](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: (S) REQUEST FOR SHARING OF INTELLIGENCE ON
LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM MOTHERSHIPS WITH THE SRI
LANKAN GOVERNMENT

REF: A. IIR 6 816 0064 08 B. 07 STATE 121260

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, James R. Moore for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (S) Charge, accompanied by DATT, met with Sri Lankan Navy (SLN) Commander Karunagoda on June 20 to receive the Sri Lankan Navy's request for location and tracking information on one or more LTTE motherships believed to be carrying weapons to a location approximately 190 miles off the Indian coast, E/NE of Chennai. The weapons would be transferred to trawlers that are currently loitering in this location, which is at the outer limit of India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

¶2. (S) Karunagoda had no further information on the two suspected motherships believed to be coming from North Korea (ref a). Karunagoda noted that the SLN has received information from Indian sources indicating that two vessels carrying weapons for the LTTE recently departed Singapore. He could not vouch for the reliability of this information. However, based on the loitering activity of the trawlers and the probability that the vessels that departed North Korea were carrying LTTE arms, Karunagoda was confident that a mothership would reach this location in the coming days.

¶3. (S) As reported in ref (a), the SLN placed a tracking device on a trawler that departed Sri Lanka to link up with a mothership in the loiter location. The SLN tracked signals from this trawler until the evening of June 18, when it lost contact with the signal beacon. To compensate for this loss of information, a SLN vessel was moved within radar range of the likely last position of the trawler. The SLN suspects that the four trawlers in the identified in the area are poised to link up with an LTTE mothership. Crew of the SLN vessels report that no suspected LTTE mothership has yet entered the area, which is east of commercial shipping lanes. Karunagoda reported the coordinates of the four trawlers as follows: 1349N/08339E, 1333N/08351E, 1347N/08339E, 1356N/08335E.

¶4. (S/NF) Karunagoda urgently requested U.S. assistance in providing location and tracking information on suspected LTTE motherships that enter the area defined by the coordinates above. The Sri Lankan Navy does not have the capability to search the area and does not want to tip off the waiting trawlers. Karunagoda emphasized that U.S.-provided tracking information had been essential in the successful interdiction of LTTE motherships west of Indonesia last year. Karunagoda said he briefed President Rajapaksa on June 19 on the Navy's efforts to identify and interdict an LTTE mothership in this area, and received his approval.

¶5. (S/NF) Charge stressed that any action by the Sri Lankan Navy against a mothership in this area should be coordinated with the Government of India. Karunagoda replied that he had consulted with Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Alok Prasad, who was uneasy about Sri Lankan naval operations in India's EEZ and asked Karunagoda to "tell India before doing

anything." Karunagoda added that Indian National Security Advisor M.K. Narayan is in Colombo June 20-21, and said he will consult with Narayan on the proposed operation and advise us of his response. Karunagoda assured Charge that Sri Lanka had not informed India of the support provided by the U.S. in previous interdiction efforts. DATT made clear that at this time we could not commit to offering any U.S. assistance, adding that even if the U.S. were able to provide tracking information, the SLN should continue to use every resource at its disposal to track the movement of motherships.

¶6. (S/NF) Comment: The Sri Lankan Navy's successful interdiction last year of several LTTE motherships demonstrated the critical role that U.S. tracking information can play in supporting Sri Lanka's efforts to interrupt the supply of LTTE weapons. Post would appreciate any assistance the USG can provide in meeting this current, time-sensitive request.

MOORE